

To: Honored Chairs Sen. Cohen and Rep. Gresko, Vice Chairs Sen. Slap and Rep. Palm, Ranking Members Sen. Miner and Rep. Harding, Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony IN SUPPORT of HB 6551. This legislation would establish an environmental equity working group composed of members from communities of color, low-income communities and communities bearing disproportionate pollution and climate change burdens. This working group, in conjunction with the Department of Public Health, the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the Labor Department will develop criteria to identify disadvantaged communities for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and co-pollutants in those communities.

According to the American Lung Association's "State of the Air 2019," Connecticut ranked 10th as the worst polluted with smog and given "F ratings" for ozone air pollution levels. When inhaled, ozone damages the lungs and compromises the ability of the body to fight respiratory infections. Asthma, for instance, is the single most avoidable cause of hospitalization, and yet Connecticut incurred \$102 million acute care charges due to asthma in 2018. Residents from Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Stamford, and Waterbury account for 18% of Connecticut's total population but account for 44% of the \$102 million of those asthma acute care charges

HB 6551 works in conjunction with Connecticut's environmental justice law to prevent further "affecting facilities" (power plants, sewage treatment plants, waste incinerators, and landfills) from being placed near low-income and minority communities. Just this week the Connecticut General Assembly passed HB 6514 to incentivize construction of new, highly polluting data centers to be built in Connecticut.

Because data centers are one of the most energy-intensive building types, it is critical that

this bill mitigate the energy and emissions impacts. The environmental justice and energy concerns include:

- Added pollution burden on environmental justice communities. There are concerns

that 25-50 megawatt diesel generators are desired by the industry, and would add to the

pollution burden of environmental justice communities. According to the Integrated

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Resources Plan , environmental justice communities bear the disproportionate burden of

air pollution from fossil power plants in Connecticut. Twenty-three of the state's large

fossil fuel generating units are located in environmental justice communities, emitting

more than 372 tons of NOx annually, and causing unhealthy levels of air pollution.

- Data centers are one of the most energy-intensive building types, consuming 10 to 50

times the energy per floor space of a typical commercial office building. Collectively,

these spaces account for approximately 2% of the total U.S. electricity use, and as our

country's use of information technology grows, data center and server energy use is

expected to grow too. As we're trying to reach a 100% clean energy goal in the state, it is

critical that data centers meet standards that will mitigate energy use.

- All large data servers use water, both directly and indirectly, and the amounts can

be very substantial.

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To mitigate these concerns, we urge you to amend the bill to:

- Prohibit diesel or fossil fuel back-up power to protect environmental justice communities.
- Require the most energy-efficient servers
- Require that construction of data centers meet a net-zero, all-electric standard
- Require that data centers conserve water by requiring air cooled or closed loop water

systems

- Require buildings be heated with waste heat from the data center, and allow excess heat to be used for thermal energy storage and or community heating needs

- Require data centers to meet sustainability goals of the municipality in which they are located.

As a member of the Branford Clean Energy Ad Hoc Committee I urge the committee to SUPPORT HB 6551 to ensure that Connecticut receives clean, non-polluting energy that protects the public health of our most vulnerable populations, as well as meaningful reduction of the state's greenhouse gas emissions. Thank you for considering these recommendations to strengthen this legislation.

Sharon Huttner

Branford, CT

